Censoring the websites

712. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have outlined a final procedure for blocking websites;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the rule under which Ministry have outlined the procedure; and

(d) this final procedure not mean censoring websites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government of India issued Gazette Notifications No. 181(E) dated 27th February, 2003; and No. 529(E) dated 7th July, 2003 on Blocking of Websites empowering Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) to issue instructions for blocking of websites. CERT-In can be approached by any of the officials listed in the first notification with a request to order blocking of a website. CERT-In verifies authenticity of the complainant, and satisfies itself that blocking of an offending website is in accordance with the conditions stated in, and the procedure outlined out in the second notification. Thereafter Director, CERT-In issues instructions to the Department of Telecommunications, who in turn order Internet Service Providers to block the offending website at their gateways.

(c) The Gazette Notifications mentioned in para (b) have been issued under Sections 67 and 88 of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

(d) No, Sir. CERT-In does not engage itself in censoring of websites only if a complaint is made to it by any of the identified senior officials of the Government listed in the first notification.